

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

January 16, 2001

CARES Stakeholder Communication Bulletin #2001-03

CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) is about providing veterans the right care, at the right time, at the right place. It is about providing appropriate access and service for those who currently use VA's health care system, and for those who will use it in the future. The program will assess veterans' health care needs across the country, identify delivery options to meet those needs in the future, and guide the realignment and allocation of capital assets to support the delivery of health care services. Through CARES, VA will optimize care delivery in terms of both quality and access.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT SCHEDULE FOR CARES IN VISN 12?

Facility visits have been completed for Hines, VA Chicago and North Chicago. The rest of the facilities are proceeding according to the following schedule.

Tomah - January 16

Madison - January 17

Milwaukee - January 18

Iron Mountain - January 23

Network meeting - January 25 (With VISN staff and the CARES Support and Clinical Task Forces)

It should be also noted that there is a separate set of meetings primarily with Engineering staff at the facilities to verify and answer any questions that have arisen regarding the previously submitted facilities assessment data which dealt with the physical plants and the inventory of functional space use. These visits will be scheduled separately and will most likely only involve the engineering and facilities management staff.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE FACILITY MEETINGS?

The Booz-Allen Hamilton (BAH) team, the contractors for the CARES Study will hold a series of meetings with the target audiences being individuals from the managerial, stakeholder, clinician, and health care quality groups at each of the VISN 12 facilities. These meetings will be accomplished in nine sessions: (1) Senior management strategic session; (2) A review of administrative services and patient projections session; (3) A Veterans Service Officer/external stakeholder session; (4) A review of clinical needs/issues session; (5) A review of patient services/quality session; (6) A review of Veterans Benefits Administration/National Cemetery Service coordination session; (7) A general employee session; (8) A review of education and research session; and (9) A final discussion of new issues with senior management. The Director of each facility will arrange these meetings to best fit the time available and the schedules of the individuals attending.

This process will be applied to health care delivery in every VA health care network in the country. In 2001, VA expects to begin CARES initiatives in Networks 1, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 21, and 22.

WHO IS CONDUCTING CARES?

To ensure objectivity in this analysis, VA has hired outside health care consultants. Two companies are involved in the study. Actuarial Consultants are conducting a study of factors such as demand for VA health care services, demographics, and other data to project what services will be needed and where. Booz-Allen Hamilton will be using this data, incorporating information from stakeholders, analyzing current operations during their visits to the facilities and develop options to meet the future needs of veterans. The consultant will be applying a standard set of preapproved criteria to various options.

WHAT OPPORTUNITY IS THERE FOR PEOPLE AND GROUPS TO HAVE A SAY IN CARES?

During the study, input will be gathered in many different ways. During the facility visits, the input sought from the many internal and external stakeholders will focus on what is important about VA health care to the individuals in the meetings. This input will help to frame the subsequent development of options. People wishing to give input at this stage should attempt to focus their comments and ideas on what is beneficial and desirable about VA health care and what is particularly important to them about that care. In addition to the meetings, input can be sent via mail, e-mail or through the use of the new CARES web site. All of the comments will be forwarded to the contractors for their use during the development of the options. Below is a suggested format with all the address information listed.

Comments have started to come in both through the mail and through the special CARES Mailbox. While individual comments cannot be acknowledged and answered individually, every comment will be forwarded to the contractor for use in the development of the options and later to the National CARES Project Team (NCPT) for their use in the evaluation of the options.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ON CARES?

There will continue to be regular bulletins about CARES with updated information. It is expected that these bulletins will be sent out at least monthly and more often if needed. The CARES web site will also be updated as frequently as needed. There are now two websites that individuals may use. For VA employees and any others who have access to the VA Intranet, there is a link on the VISN 12 Home Page for CARES. In addition, VA's Internet website has been established at the following address: www.va.gov/cno. The form below has been updated to include the new internet site address.

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Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Comment Form
VISN 12 CARES STUDY

Areas of Interest: _____

Comments (Please add additional pages if needed):

Name (please print): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail address: _____ Date: _____

Mail comments to: CARES Comments
VISN 12 Office (10N12)
P.O. Box 5000, Building 18
Hines, IL 60141-5000

E-mail comments to: CARES.Mailbox@med.va.gov

Washington Website: www.va.gov/cno